

# Committee on Resources

## Subcommittee on Forests & Forest Health

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### Testimony

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TESTIMONY  
NATIONAL LEWIS AND CLARK BICENTENNIAL COUNCIL  
PRESENTED BY:  
Dr. Robert Gatten, Board of Directors and  
Michelle D. Bussard, Executive Director  
NATIONAL LEWIS AND CLARK BICENTENNIAL COUNCIL  
FOR THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FORESTS AND FOREST HEALTH  
JUNE 17, 1999

Good morning Madam Chairman Chenoweth and members of the Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health. I am Michelle D. Bussard, Executive Director of the National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Council. I am pleased to be joined by Dr. Robert Gatten, Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, who is a founding director and continuing member of the Council's board of directors. We are here to represent the National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Council.

### INTRODUCTION

The Lewis and Clark expedition of 1803-1806 was a major event that shaped the boundaries, western land expansion, and the very future of the United States. The legacy of that expedition perhaps more than any other event in the last 200 years of our history has influenced who we are as Americans and the ideals we hold high. The Council is honored that congress, Madam Chairman Chenoweth and many of her congressional associates that represent districts on the trail have been likewise inspired by this incredible American experience and have invited the Council to testify before you today.

The Council's mission is simply to honor president Jefferson's compelling vision that inspired the journey of Lewis and Clark and to commemorate that journey by rekindling its spirit of exploration, acclaiming the partnerships and contributions of Congress and the Federal Agencies, and the goodwill and active assistance of the native peoples - all so influential to the success of the President's Corps of Discovery. We view the voyage of Lewis and Clark as an inspiration to young Americans, which will strengthen their understanding of our Nation's history.

At this point, I would like to ask that Dr. Gatten share with you how and why the Council was established and is presently structured.

### BACKGROUND

The National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Council, headquartered in Vancouver, Washington, was established in 1993 by the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation. The Foundation, headquartered in Great Falls, Montana, was created in 1969 by what was then a federally mandated Lewis and Clark Commission, itself created in 1964 by Public Law 88-630. The purpose of the Foundation was to carry on the work of the Commission: to reawaken the national interest in the Expedition, promote preserve and protect historic sites of the Expedition, and support activities which enhance understanding and enjoyment of the Lewis and Clark story. The Council is honored to be able to call on the organization, its twenty local chapters and its 2,500 members for their wealth of historical, scholarly and archival information.

The Foundation established the Council to serve as the national center for promotion, coordination and collaboration for the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark expedition. The Council was incorporated in the State of Washington in 1993 as a 501C3, non-profit corporation. The Council's charge is to engage and work with federal, state, regional and city agencies, community and civic organizations, museums, educational and historical institutions, and Sovereign Nations in the planning the national commemoration that will honor and tell the story of the expedition in a manner that reflects historical accuracy and multi-cultural perspectives. This, with the understanding that the Lewis and Clark story has unique and different meanings for everyone.

## **AFFILIATIONS AND SOURCES OF RECOGNITION**

The significance of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial and the imperative for partnership, collaboration and leadership was recognized by the 105th congress with passage of House Resolution 114 (9/23/98) and Senate Resolution 57 (5/23/97). Both resolutions called for cooperation at all levels of government and with the leadership of the National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Council.

One of the many outcomes of this congressional support was development of the Memorandum of Understanding, signed October 1, 1998. This document simply recognizes and brings together the relevant federal agencies whose congressional mandates charge them with specific responsibilities for public lands, national forests, waterways, education, and transportation in order that there can be a general framework for cooperation and achievement of common goals. This is all very clearly stated in the MOU. The MOU does not confer, nor does the Council seek, any authorities whatsoever over public lands, national forests, waterways, transportation, or education. The Council is not a federally agency; it is a private, not-for-profit corporation.

## **ORGANIZATION**

A 25-member board of directors who represent historical, educational, and interpretive institutions, the military, corporate interests, the Foundation, private citizens, and Native Americans and come from seventeen different states, presently governs the Council. They serve wholly as volunteers committed to coordinating and promoting the commemoration of the Lewis and Clark bicentennial 2003-2006. After the bicentennial, in 2007, Council will cease operations. At that time, it will archive and deposit with the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation its papers, publications and any remaining financial resources.

At this time, I'd like to turn the balance of our testimony over to Michelle Bussard to speak to the Council's approach to the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

## **VISION AND GOALS**

It is a daunting task. Congress, the Federal Agencies and the Council have recognized that the nation's vision for the bicentennial cannot be accomplished in a vacuum, soloed, or with one all encompassing story line. In fact, each trail state and tribe encountered by the expedition has its very own unique story to tell and should be encouraged to do so. Four major areas of emphasis summarize the Council's vision for the bicentennial in Education; Conservation; Commemorative Events and Native American Legacies.

The Council is concerned for what the impacts will be of the tourism during the years of the bicentennial; both from a positive and negative perspective. Trail states have an unprecedented opportunity to market and promote their rural and heritage tourism attractions in communities throughout their state and in so doing bring needed economic resources to these communities. In addition, trail states and affiliated sites have an opportunity to stage significant national bicentennial events in their major cities further leveraging economic benefits. Promotion of rural and heritage tourism is showing in study after study significant local economic benefits. The trail states have much to gain in the years leading up to and during the bicentennial.

On the other hand, if the numbers are anything like what some have projected, there will be significant negative impacts that must be anticipated and planned for, especially for the official years of the bicentennial: 2003-2006. Many, including author Stephen Ambrose have repeatedly expressed grave concerns for the trampling of pristine wilderness areas, trespass on private lands, the state of readiness and sanitation services with the influx of tourists. But, there is an absence of good data and more information on visitor numbers is critically needed, now. There are many wildly different projections of visitor numbers. These projections currently serve no useful purpose other than to spread alarm. The fact is that right now we don't have statistically or significantly reliable numbers that would serve as tool for federal, state, regional and local planning. Towards that end, the Council is encouraging the trail states to work with us on developing a definitive visitor projection for the years of the bicentennial that can be shared among all interest parties.

The Council can only encourage responsible planning and readiness. We have no authority or resources that embolden or enlarge our mission other than the inspirations of the journals and the stories of generations of Native Americans, and the dream of bringing this commemorative event to all Americans. This especially means promoting access to the educational tools and curriculum that will enlarge our youth's understanding of this momentous event in our history: its leadership, management, scientific, cultural, and ecological lessons and legacies.

## **PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES**

Towards that end, the Council has encouraged numerous forums for interaction and exchange that have successfully engaged the spectrum of partners and players in the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark expedition: tribes, federal agencies, congress, states and regional organizations. These forums have included both the recently created House and Senate caucuses on Lewis and Clark; our annual national planning workshop that this year brought over 300 individuals together; regional bicentennial planning meetings most notably the recent meeting in Lewiston, Idaho with more planned for the states of North Dakota and Washington; and federal agency meetings that are taking place at the national and regional levels for the purposes of coordinating planning and management; and three tribal summits that took place in April and May. The Council only power is that of encouragement and collaboration.

Our tools and resources to accomplish our mission are frankly limited. The Council has had one full time executive director for only a little over one year and a few months ago, a support staff position added. With volunteer resources, we have established a website that provides a national calendar, a national projects

inventory and information on our federal, state, tribal, educational, and institutional partners. With volunteered resources and capabilities, we have created a newsletter Field Notes, that offers periodic updates on the Council, our partnerships, product endorsements, planning workshops and events.

The Council receives funding through a cooperative agreement and challenge cost share grants with the National Park Service, revenues from our annual planning workshop and an annual giving campaign for a total budget of approximately \$117,000. The National Park Service which holds the administrative authority for the Lewis and Clark Trail, bases its cooperative agreement with the Council on P.L. 97-258, Chapter 63 that provides for the establishment of cooperative agreements to carry out a stated public purpose instead of acquiring the property or services for the direct benefit or use of the United States government (§6305). We receive no other federal funding. We have envisioned a corporate sponsorship campaign but until a clear, national plan for the bicentennial is fully developed and endorsed by our board and partners, we have not engaged corporate funding as a source of support.

As the interest in the Lewis and Clark expedition builds, we find ourselves still guided by the explorers who inspire us to refresh our interest, respect for, and stewardship of our land -- its geology, botany, animal life, cultures, history and heritage. It is our hope that you will feel compelled to join us in commemorating the bicentennial of the Lewis & Clark expedition and help to bring to all Americans this incredible story and thereby create a truly incredible lasting legacy of which we can all continue to be proud.

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ATTACHMENT:

National Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Council [Business Plan](#) (1997-2007)

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